New Permanent Diaconate Formation Program to begin in 2021

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer has announced that a new class of the Permanent Diaconate Program for the Diocese will begin at the start of next year.

The bishop extended his invitation to pastors to nominate men who wish to consider the Permanent Diaconate.

Approximately 20 men – and their spouses, if they are married – will be admitted to a year of aspirancy (exploration and discernment) beginning in January of 2021. The program will last a total of five years.

Participants will be selected taking into account projected needs of the parishes, ministries, and geography of the Diocese.

Nominees must be faithful Catholic men, between the ages of 35 and 62, Catholic for at least three years, in a valid and stable marriage of at least seven years (if married), and known to the pastor of their parish. In addition, they must possess an undergraduate degree, or its equivalent, be able to undertake graduate level studies, and be gainfully employed.

Applications for the Permanent Diaconate will be accepted until September 15, 2020. A rigorous interview process will lead to admission to the program, which is anticipated for 2021-2026. Applications must be obtained from the pastor after an applicant’s initial discussion with him; they cannot be obtained directly from any Diocesan office.

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Thank You For Contributing to the Catholic Communication Campaign

The Diocesan Office of Communications expresses its gratitude to those who contributed to the Catholic Communication Campaign this month. Your donations support us in our continued efforts to connect communities to Christ.

Contributions to the Catholic Communication Campaign support the Church’s efforts to remain a strong voice in the media through TV, radio, newspapers, podcasts, and the Internet. 100% of the Communications Campaign money which stays in the Diocese of Harrisburg is used to support the following Communications Ministries:

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To report suspected abuse of a minor, please follow these two steps:

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IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE WITH BOTH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE DIOCESE.

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Diocese of Harrisburg Youth Protection Program    www.YouthProtectionHBG.com

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Digital subscriptions provided complimentary to all parishioners registered to a parish in the Diocese of Harrisburg. The Catholic Witness (ISSN 0008-8447, USPS 557 120) is published digitally weekly except Christmas/New Year by the Harrisburg Catholic Publishing Association, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111.
The Diaconate is an order of the Catholic clergy open to married and single men. As such, the Permanent Deacon is a member of the Church’s hierarchy, who is configured to Christ the Servant through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

In the Diocese, there have been three previous classes of deacons ordained for service: 1978, 1983 and 2010. The 42 men in the first program were ordained by Bishop Joseph Daley at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg in June 1978. A second class of 28 was ordained by Bishop William Keeler in June 1983, and a third class of 23 men was ordained by Bishop Kevin Rhoades in May 2010.

The current class of 35 candidates, whose formation program began in 2015, is expected to be ordained on Sept. 12 of this year.

Virgilio Centenera, a candidate in the class that will be ordained this fall, recalled when he applied to the program.

“I can recall as I sent in my application for the diaconate I wasn’t really sure what lied ahead, but as always I put it all in God’s hands. As I’ve learned over the years, whenever I do that I am blessed in ways I couldn’t even imagine,” he said.

Reflecting on the program, he said “These five years have allowed me to learn my Catholic faith in a unique way that has allowed me to appreciate its wisdom, its beauty, and the manner in which our faith is an expression of the truth of our lives. In doing so, it has opened my eyes to view the world through a different lens, a lens which will provide answers yet to be asked. Secondly, the process has allowed me to form bonds with a special group of men, a group that I can truly call brothers. This special bond is one that I hope will form the foundation for the brotherhood I join through ordination.”

The word “deacon” comes from the Greek word diakonos, meaning “servant” or “minister.” Becoming a deacon is a vocation, that is, a calling from God.

A deacon is an ordained minister of the Catholic Church. They can perform a variety of roles in the Church. During Mass, as Ministers of the Word, they can proclaim the Gospel, preach and teach in the name of the Church. As ministers of Sacrament, deacons can baptize, lead the faithful in prayer, witness marriages, and conduct wake and funeral services. As ministers of Charity, deacons are leaders in identifying the needs of others and working to match the Church’s resources to meet those needs. Deacons are to be a servant in a servant-Church.
‘Enter into the Chaos’ of the Lives of Others, Bishop Encourages during Mass on Feast of St. Thomas More

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

Celebrating a pre-recorded Mass for the June 22 Feast of St. Thomas More, Bishop Ronald Gainer cautioned against the temptation of re-ordering the lives of others and encouraged the faithful instead to ‘enter into the chaos’ of the lives of those we encounter.

“As we celebrate his feast day today and seek about doing our own vocations, I would hope we would ask for that particular grace to avoid the temptation to re-order the lives of others and to allow ourselves to act as Christ acted toward us: to enter in to the chaos of others’ lives [to] stand there as a sign of God’s mercy and understanding,” the bishop said in his homily.

On June 22, the Church celebrates the life and witness of St. Thomas More. A devout Catholic and a lawyer, scholar, author, government servant and Lord Chancellor, he was imprisoned in 1534 and beheaded in 1535 by the order of King Henry VIII for refusing to sign the king’s Act of Supremacy and Act of Succession.

Each year, the St. Thomas More Society of Central Pennsylvania sponsors a Mass on his Feast Day. The Society was established by Catholic lawyers and judges to promote Christian principles in the law in the spirit of St. Thomas More.

The celebration of this year’s Mass was recorded by members of the Diocesan Office of Communications in the Diocesan Center chapel, due to continued social distancing guidelines. It is available for viewing on the Diocese’s YouTube Channel.

In his homily, Bishop Gainer made a connection between an excerpt from St. Thomas More’s personal epitaph and the day’s Gospel Reading for the Feast, the Sermon on the Mount.

St. Thomas More, in his epitaph, refers to King Henry VIII as an “excellent Sovereign” and writes of “the unparalleled graciousness of a most indulgent Sovereign,” even though he was already imprisoned by Henry and knows of his intentions.

The epitaph is “an examination of More’s own conscience, not a condemnation or critique of the king, but an examination of More’s conscience from the viewpoint of God himself,” Bishop Gainer remarked.

He connected it to the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus says to his disciples, “Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged.”

“[Jesus] talks about the...
wooden beam in my own eye, which prevents me from seeing the splinter in your eye. By way of that exaggeration, Our Lord is teaching very clearly a truth that I think we all know in our own lives — our own tendency to ignore our faults, to overlook our failings and sins, our shortcomings, and to enlarge the failings of those around us,” Bishop Gainer remarked.

“Many times, we attempt to re-order the lives of others,” the bishop said, advising that we can take a lesson from St. Thomas More’s epitaph and his treatment of others with understanding and mercy.

“St. Thomas More doesn’t agree with Henry’s decisions one bit, but he’s not trying to re-order Henry’s life by his judgments or criticisms,” Bishop Gainer said.

“St. Thomas More shows us the way: we need to enter into the chaos of the lives of others. That requires us to let go of our own idea of what’s right and what’s the correct way…. Enter into the situation of their lives with understanding and mercy,” he said. “Isn’t that what the Son of God has done for us? Isn’t that why Jesus speaks about judgment in the Sermon on the Mount? The Son of God did that for us – he entered into the chaos of humanity in order to save us, and he brought God’s order to all who accept him as Savior.”

Karen Balaban, an attorney and one of the original members of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Pennsylvania, spoke of how the homily and St. Thomas More’s epitaph caused her to personally reflect on her approach to disagreements with leadership.

“The homily reaffirmed my commitment to continue praying for the president in spite of my many disagreements with, and disapproval of, his behavior, character, competence and policies. In spite of these differences with the president, I acknowledge that he is a human being made in the image and likeness of God, and needs our prayers,” she said.

Balaban is in her second tenure of service on the Society’s board, and said “Besides being a beautiful, peaceful venue, the event provides an inexpensive and convenient opportunity for our members and their family to participate in one of the several events sponsored by the St Thomas More Society of Central Pennsylvania.”

“It is special to have an in-person community to worship with, however, since the Feast Day was on a Monday, it would have been difficult for many lawyers to attend,” she pointed out. “I noticed that the YouTube counter said 92 views. That is close to twice the number in attendance last year when the Mass was celebrated at St. Theresa’s in New Cumberland on a Saturday. I was pleased to see the increased level of participation, especially since Bishop Gainer was generous with his time celebrating the Mass, and presented an excellent homily.”

Gerard Mackarevich, a 25-year member of the St. Thomas More Society, also expressed gratitude for the celebration of the annual Mass.

“The bishop made it a meaningful experience for Society members this year, even with the absence of the physical celebration of the Eucharist and the fellowship that goes along with it,” he said. “Bishop Gainer could easily have just postponed this year’s event, but instead made lemonade out of lemons with an intimate remote celebration and a memorable homily.”

Mackarevich, who has worked in private practice and with the state throughout his career as a lawyer, said he was enriched by St. Thomas More’s epitaph.

“How remarkable it was that this humble man who had lost his title and his freedom at the hands of a tyrant could still show respect to the man who took it all from him,” he said.

In addition to the annual Feast Day Mass, the Society also sponsors the annual Red Mass that coincides with the start of the U.S. Supreme Court’s term in October, and gatherings with speakers who address current issues of religious freedom in the state and in the country.

“To me, the best part of the Society is the opportunities it provides for personal spiritual growth alongside committed Catholic lawyers and clergy, whether it is at small group settings like luncheon Lenten reflections and the Advent Mass at [chaplain] Father Paul Clark’s parish, or the larger traditional gatherings like the annual Red Mass,” Mackarevich said.
New Principals Look Forward to Continuing Mission of Catholic Schools

The Diocese of Harrisburg announced the appointment of seven new administrators who will lead several Catholic schools beginning July 1. The new administrators, most of whom will serve as principals, bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and love for Catholic education to their positions.

The administrators joining the Catholic school system in the Diocese of Harrisburg are:

**Mr. Peter Morisco**, principal, St. Columba School, Bloomsburg. Mr. Morisco previously served as the principal of Holy Family School in Berwick.

**Ms. Patricia Wilding**, principal, St. John the Baptist School, New Freedom. Ms. Wilding has extensive experience as a classroom teacher, both at St. John the Baptist School and with several other school districts.

**Mr. Robert James**, principal, St. Rose of Lima School, Thomasville. Mr. James has extensive experience with the York City School District, including administration.

**Ms. Donna Tompkins**, interim principal, Delone Catholic High School, McSherrystown. Ms. Tompkins has been a teacher in the Diocesan school system for more than 30 years and currently is the Director of Studies for Delone Catholic.

**Ms. Deborah Henry and Ms. Lorie Torquato**, administrative team, Sacred Heart of Jesus School, Lewistown. Ms. Henry is currently the third grade, Religion and Lead teacher for Sacred Heart School. She has been with the school for more than 25 years. Ms. Torquato, the current kindergarten teacher, has been with Sacred Heart for 24 years.

**Ms. Kyla Hockley**, principal, St. John Neumann School, Lancaster. Ms. Hockley is currently the admissions director for Lancaster Catholic High School. She previously served as a theology teacher at Lancaster Catholic and as the director of religious education at St. James and St. Alexis Parish in Pittsburgh.

“We are very excited to welcome these new leaders to our Catholic school family in the Diocese of Harrisburg. All of these individuals bring experience and passion for Catholic education to their new roles and they will be great additions to their respective schools,” said Daniel J. Breen, Secretary for Education and Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese.

“On behalf of the Diocese, I also wish to thank Dr. Robert Marande, Ms. Susan Mareck, Ms. Peggy Rizzuto, Mr. Richard La Rocca, Dr. Joe Maginnis and Ms. Suzanne Wood for their dedicated years of service to our students, staff, faculty and Catholic education in the Diocese. We thank them and wish them well as they have all expressed their intent to retire after terrific careers.”

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Each new principal/administrator was evaluated by a selection panel, which was formed by each individual school.

The new administrators expressed appreciation for their appointments, and enthusiasm as they look to the start of a new school year.

“I am honored and humbled about the new experience I am moving forward with, and am looking forward to bringing my vision to St. Columba School,” said Morisco. “I’ve met the staff and we’re looking forward to a great, positive learning experience for our students. We want to promote what is unique about our Catholic schools, and that is that we can carry on and accommodate students – even in this pandemic – and give them a quality Catholic education.”

Wilding remarked that she is “truly blessed to be a part of the St. John the Baptist family. The school has an incredibly dedicated faculty, wonderful families who partner with us, and faithful students who make us all proud every day. I am thankful for the opportunity to continue my career as principal at St. John the Baptist School. I look forward to working with the school and Church communities to continue the school’s tradition of excellence in Catholic based education.”

In a video message on St. Rose of Lima School’s Facebook page, James said he is “very excited to start this new position. I am an alumnus of St. Rose of Lima School. I enjoyed my time here and I can’t wait to get started. I’m looking forward to meeting everybody and talking with everybody to find out our strengths, our weaknesses, where we want to go with St. Rose, and I want to continue all the good things Ms. Rizzuto did. I’m very excited to get started on this new journey.”

At Delone, Tompkins said the “amazing and dedicated” faculty and staff are the main reason she accepted the role as interim principal. “I think they recognize that we are a team and we are all in this together with a common goal…. Another aspect that makes Delone Catholic special is all of the students who enter our doors each year. Our students reflect well-rounded, kind and bright young men and women. I feel blessed having had the ability to teach so many of them over the years before moving into an administrative role…. The last piece of this puzzle is our volunteers. Without all those individuals that are behind the scenes doing all those thankless jobs, we would not be this smooth running machine. So many people go into making Delone Catholic what it is and I am just amazed as well as proud to be a part of the tradition.”

At Sacred Heart in Lewistown, Henry and Torquato will serve as co-administrators.

“Having been dedicated to the education at Sacred Heart School for 25+ years, we are excited about the new endeavor and working with the faculty, staff, parents and students to continue making Sacred Heart School a shining light in our community.”

Hockley said “It is an honor and privilege to serve the families of St. Anne Parish, St. John Neumann Parish and St. Anne School as we transition to St. John Neumann School. My passion is supporting Catholic education in Lancaster County, which I have loved doing for the past 17 years, nine of which have been as Director of Admissions at Lancaster Catholic. I am excited to put my strengths together with...
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those of the faculty and staff in service to the communities we serve, while inviting new families into our mission and ministry. Given the transition to St. John Neumann, we will be able to look at every aspect of school life with new eyes as we look to maximize our academic, faith formation, and service opportunities for our students. I am confident that as a school community, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we will leverage the energy of this transition as we write the next chapter in our history.’

All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg are accepting enrollments for the 2020/21 school year. Visit www.GoCatholicSchools.org to learn more.

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Corpus Christi Men’s Retreat Will be Offered Online

The 42nd Corpus Christi Men’s Retreat, offered yearly to men of the Diocese, will take place in an online format on Saturday, Aug. 1, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Father Luis Rodriguez, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Chambersburg, will lead the virtual retreat, offered free of charge.

Registration is requested for planning purposes, and is available on the retreat website at https://cccmensretreat.weebly.com/. To join in the live retreat on Aug. 1, go to the Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr75D8qih_SwttMLj2vmWiOQ/

Father Rodriguez will expand on the theme for the men’s retreat: “2020 Vision in Christ, Healer of Our Interior Life.” In addition to presenting four sessions, Father Rodriguez will celebrate Holy Mass. Other devotional activities planned include a Scriptural Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Adoration and Benediction.

The retreat is geared toward men of all ages in the Harrisburg Diocese. Brothers, fathers, sons and grandsons are encouraged to view the retreat together. Donations are accepted to help defray the costs, and can be mailed by check payable to ‘Corpus Christi Men’s Retreat’ to 320 Philadelphia Avenue, Chambersburg, PA 17201.

For information, contact Keith R. Smith at 717-263-3442, or corpuschristimensretreat@yahoo.com.
Share with us where you grew up and your childhood experiences.

I grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and I am the oldest of four boys. My father, Peter, was Italian-American and my mother, Mary, was Irish-American. I would say that I grew up in what can be called a middle class family. My father was a construction worker and my mom started out as a stay-at-home mother until later. When we grew up, she became a secretary for an oncology doctor and she did that for many years.

I lived in Brooklyn for 26 years until I left for my vocation and seminary training. I went to Cathedral Prep High School in Brooklyn, and that was the high school seminary for the Brooklyn Diocese at the time. I thought about becoming a priest in the eighth grade. I went into high school where there were 110 seminarians studying for the priesthood, and I graduated with 26 who were not. After I graduated high school, I wanted to be a history major so I went to St. Francis College in downtown Brooklyn and the sister college, of course, is in Latrobe in Pennsylvania.

I did my four years of college and graduated as a history major, and after college I still had the idea of wanting to be a priest. At that time I looked into the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and joined them. I did two years of studies in Washington, D.C., at Oblate College, which is now closed and then moved to Texas. I joined them in 1987 until 1992. I came back home and worked in the New York public school system as a teacher. I started out as a substitute teacher, but then I went from that to work for the Bureau of Education. We would review all the different federal program funding that was given to the schools, like English as a Second Language and special education needs, making sure that all the money being appropriated was being used properly. It was essentially auditing. I enjoyed that work and I did it for two years. I got to go to parts of New York City that I would not normally go. I was in Harlem and many other neighborhoods, but I enjoyed it because I got to see parts of the education system that I would not normally see or even knew existed. But I still had this thing about the priesthood and having a call to pursue that vocation.

What steps did you take to pursue that call?

A friend of mine told me about going to the Diocese of Metuchen in New Jersey. At the time, I was in my late 20s and I spent a year as a postulate year at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in New Brunswick. At the end of that year, the pastor and I agreed that I was not being called to be a diocesan priest in that diocese. I then went to a temp agency, where I did various little jobs and I eventually got to Merrill Lynch. I worked at that company for five years in the 401K department. I helped with the paperwork side of things with the 401K program. I never thought I would be doing something like working in the economics sector of our economy.

That seems like quite stretch for a

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history major.
Yes, it was. But you see, it all shows that my vocation was a winding road. In 2000, I was invited to go to the Jubilee Year in Rome – designated so by Pope Saint John Paul II. It was a Eucharistic pilgrimage. It was during that pilgrimage that God hit me square in the face and said to me that I had to “get back to doing what I am calling you to do – I want you to be a priest.” I came back from that Rome pilgrimage and went on a discernment retreat soon after with an Oblates of Mary Immaculate priest up in Boston. I had always had devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and this Oblate priest told me look into the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Had you ever heard of this order before?
No, I had not, and so after my retreat I gave the Missionaries a call and they were doing a retreat here for the pastor at the time, Father Messaro, here at St. Mary’s. After that, I made a visit to what we call our motherhouse for the America’s in Linden, New Jersey, and did a retreat there and met the vocations director. After a second visit I made the decision to join the Missionaries. That was in 2001 and I did my novitiate here in Fairfield.

Since your previous studies with the Oblates, you were down the road a little from beginning anew?
Yes, I had a ten-year hiatus between the Oblates and the Missionaries. Again, my vocation has been a winding road, but the thing is, I think God has blessed me because I understand what unemployment means, I understand what it means to pay the bills and not be able to pay the bills. I had a girlfriend, and broke up with a girlfriend, so I have had real-life experience. In some ways I have been blessed, so when I became the vocations director for the Missionaries, I could understand where guys were coming from with issues, financial issues. As a vocations director, I can find out if they are wanting to join the Missionaries or wanting to escape from something. You have to see where they are coming from; that is the job of a vocations director.

When were you ordained?
Bishop Rhoades ordained me a transitional deacon here at St. Mary’s and I did my postulant and novitiate here also and finished my studies at Mount St. Mary’s in 2004. I was still in temporary vows so I was not ordained with my class. I did a year in New Jersey and then came back here. In 2006, I was ordained both a transitional deacon and to the priesthood in the same year. I was ordained in Lynnwood, New Jersey, to the priesthood, by Cardinal O’Brien, on June 24.

You have had quite an incredible diversity of life experience, would you not say?
Yes, I have. In hospital ministry, I got to see people at their most vulnerable. Talk about being a good shepherd and finding lost sheep – that was how I saw that ministry. Eighty percent of the Catholics that I came across would always say, “I have not been to church in a while, Father,” or “I’ve not been to Confession in years, and I have issues with the teachings of the Church.” Bringing them back into the Church was the goal, and I always had the fun part of trying to get both men and women back to going to Confession. They would say to me, “I do not know where to even start,” or, “Father, you do not have all day to be with me.” But I really did, and that was a challenge. But after multiple visits, many would come around. Some just did not want to.

I remember people just bringing their full emotions out. One lady who was crying told me it was not tears of sorrow but of joy of having this burden lifted off her that she had been carrying around for years and years. She happened to die a few days later, but the gift of the sacrament was knowing she died in peace, having had this enormous burden lifted from her by the mercy of Christ. Also, meeting Protestants and non-Catholics taught me quite a bit so it was ecumenical ministry as well. It was

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a wonderful experience and it helped me when I became a pastor for the first time at St. Joseph the Worker in Bonneauville.

Tell us about that first assignment as a priest in the Diocese of Harrisburg.

There I was able to share my experiences, in homilies and in ministry. Having experiences helps bring it down to earth for people and I still use my experiences, work and ministry to teach through homilies.

How do you prepare for your homilies?

I try to relate what is going on today with Readings and the Gospel many times, and not so much about me, but about the situation. Like the social justice issues we are having currently did not start in 2020. These issues go way back and we must learn to have conversations instead of burning buildings. It makes it worse in the long term. But when you want a conversation, all people see is the negative side and destruction. There needs to be a conversation. That is something I have learned as a chaplain, and I see it with people who have been hurt by the Church – not a racial thing – but they hold deep resentments that go way back. Like, “Father did not do this, Father did this and that upset me.” The hurts go back, and the thing is when you start to have a conversation, many people talk about something 30 years ago. Today, I tell them, this would not happen. The Church has grown and changed.

You actually are able to resolve some of these issues when you get down to talking about them. Many times a current pastor can help solve an issue that has been a source of resentment for many years. It is important to have the dialogue. It is about building bridges, and we need to start doing that more often.

I also always try and tie a saint into my homilies and I like very much the lives of the saints. That is probably the history major in me speaking.

Who are some of your favorite saints?

I have a couple of them. St. Thérèse of Lisieux is one and my founder (St. Gaetano Errico) is another. One of the reasons I joined the Missionaries was because of his story. He did not have a straight road to the priesthood, either. He wanted to be a Redemptorist priest at the time, but they had a quota system when Napoleon took over so he became a diocesan priest in Naples because the Redemptorists were full. He still had a great love for the Redemptorists and would still go on retreats and Holy Hours. I went over to see his canonization in 2008 in Rome. A bunch of us went over, and we were to serve the Mass and go out into the people and give Communion in the Square.

Do you have a favorite aspect of your ministry?

One of my favorite parts outside of saying Mass is the Sacrament of Confession. I want to always be there for the person who feels that they cannot be forgiven for their sins. God is going to be there with his open arms. He is going to be there with his love and mercy at all times. Our founder (St. John Vianney) was a great confessor. St. John Vianney listened to Confessions sometimes 16 hours a day. I like to make sure that nobody is ever turned away. Even during this pandemic, I would go out to hear Confessions, adhering to social distancing. That is important in times like this. It is important all the time, but especially so now.

Could you talk about the challenges of being a priest and pastor during a worldwide pandemic?

The challenge is how to reach your congregation. Much of my congregation is older; they do not use social media, Facebook or even e-mail. They may have cable TV and that may be quite limited in offerings. I sent out a letter to all my parishioners, and the good news is that many have internet. So we did do live streaming and I encouraged as many as possible to do this. We even just posted the bulletins on the church doors and told people to spread the word to as many parishioners as possible about parish news. We did get feedback through Facebook and e-mail and that was helpful.

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They were appreciative. Some parishioners were not happy with us not giving Holy Communion. We had folks upset with state requirements rather than Diocesan regulations. It has become a political issue, unfortunately. You always have a few that are going to be upset, but the vast majority have had no issues.

What do you do in your free time, or what hobbies do you have?

One of my hobbies is reading. I like to read history and spiritual readings as well. I am reading a book by Scott Hahn right now on the Resurrection, which I am enjoying. I like to read novels like Tom Clancy, in that genre, for pleasure. Sometimes I just like to do puzzles – word puzzles and things to keep my mind sharp. I just enjoy the grace here and the beauty of this area. This is a beautiful area here, and at outdoor Mass I found many people just looking at the beautiful hills and vista here.

What advice do you give to a young person who may be in their 20s that has not or is not following the more traditional route of pursuing their vocation?

My journey has definitely been a winding road, like I said before. I try and tell guys that not everybody gets called the same way. Sometimes you are going to have a detour, maybe more than one, but that does not mean you shut yourself off to that call of the possibility of being a priest. Sometimes he may make you go a different road for a while.

When I was asked by the Oblates to leave, I was hurt. I took my vows not as temporary, but as permanent. So when I was asked to leave, it took me a while to adjust to being a lay person again. But thank the Lord, I was able to find a job and adjust. I worked at a homeless shelter for a while in Catholic Charities; I worked at a halfway house as well with troubled youth. They did not have families to go back to. Some were addicts and I had to sit in on their support meetings. God put me in all these different positions for a reason, and I think I was made vocation director in our order because of my various experiences.

Share your experiences of being a vocations director.

One of the things a vocations director must ask and find out is, are they running away from something or not wanting to deal with an issue or be responsible. I would tell these guys that the road may go left and right and not straight, and it is important to constantly pray and ask the Lord for his help in putting you in the right direction. You cannot fall into despair and discouragement. Maybe you are not called to be a missionary, but maybe you are called to be a diocesan priest or deacon. I tried to be encouraging to the guys. I had great family support throughout my vocation journey. You have to find somebody that you have who you can turn to; it is not always your parents, but you need at least one person who you can turn to and trust. People here in this part of the Diocese very much support vocations in this area. I think the parishioners seeing us down here get to see the paths we have taken, and we appreciate their support very much.

(Interview conducted by Chris Heisey, The Catholic Witness.)
The Sin of Racism
By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC
Special to The Witness

In just a few months, our entire world has completely changed right before our very eyes. The global pandemic has shown us that we are all connected in some amazing way. It has isolated us in a way that nothing else in modern times has done before. Yet, as we fought against the isolation, we called out, “You are not alone!” In the shutdown, the entire globe became silent as we realized the fragility and temporariness of life.

From the silence of the pandemic, we heard one voice cry out, “I can’t breathe!” With the death of George Floyd, the world screamed back, “Enough!” It was as if the silence of the stay-at-home order made this cry of discrimination into a deafening roar. Something in all of us was awakened. I have spent the last few weeks praying and reflecting on the images of hatred, anger and civil unrest that have pierced the silence of my heart.

In the parish and neighborhood where I grew up, most of the people I came across looked like me. My first experience meeting a person of color came with the beginning of elementary school. I was six years old and a bit nervous going to the “big kids’” school. When I met my first-grade teacher, I could not take my eyes off of her. I thought that she was absolutely beautiful with her black hair, her dark skin and her white teeth. She took time with each of us. We all learned in a personal way that she truly cared for each of us individually. What was more striking for me was the way in which she taught us how to pray. I loved to sneak a peek and watch her after she received Communion. Her love of God was clearly visible, and she taught us about God’s love not only by her words but by the way she treated us. She expected that we would treat each other in a way that mimicked Christ in the modern world. Whenever I think about prayer, I cannot help thinking about Sister Alice Francis. Because of her, I know have an image of God the Father as a man of color who rejoices in the simplicity of the sunset or the sunrise He just created.

Where does anyone, especially a white religious, begin to talk about the evil of racism? Conversations about sexism and Catholic-bashing I could lead, hands down. Racism? No way. I understand walking into a store and having people stare at you, or little kids calling out as they point, “Mommy, what is THAT?” I have seen the fear on people’s faces who’ve viewed my veil as a burka since 9/11. But prejudices against the simple color of my skin? I have no idea whatsoever about that.

Even though I am ignorant about a personal experience of this kind of prejudice, I do believe racism is born from evil. The Evil One divides and separates and makes enemies of one another. This is the antithesis of what the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus, is all about. It leads to the mistreatment of people based on their race, color, national origin, or ancestry. This mistreatment takes place first on a person-to-person level. From there, it spreads out to institutions that legalized or tolerated structures of society that benefited one group above another. This is always sinful!

In 1979, the U.S. Bishops wrote a pastoral letter on racism called, Brothers and Sisters to Us. One paragraph from that document reads: “Racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of the family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of race. It is the sin that makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights. . . . racism is more than a disregard for the words of Jesus; it is a denial of the truth of the dignity of each human being revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation.”

Where do we go from here? I personally think

More MUSINGS, page 14
OBITUARIES
The names of the following deceased persons have been submitted by their parishes. Please remember in your prayers the happy repose of these recently departed souls and the consolation of their loved ones.

Abbottstown
Immaculate Heart of Mary:
Louise Swoots

Lebanon
Assumption BVM:
Gail Marie Rusnak
Margaret “Betty” Edkin
Shirley Houtz
Terrence Smith

Middletown
Seven Sorrows BVM:
Larry Carr
Betty Houser

Bloomsburg
St. Columba:
Victor L. Kimkal

Rohrerstown
St. Leo the Great:
Rene Rheault
Patrick Wippel
Nicholas Schmalhofer

Coal Township
Our Lady of Hope:
Rita Yost

Sunbury
St. Monica:
Elsie Burke

Elizabethtown
St. Peter:
Kathy Jo Narkiewiz

York
St. Rose of Lima:
Richard Steinfelt

MUSINGS
continued from 13
that each of us needs to listen to our brothers and sisters who have been affected by racism. Give them a chance to speak their experience of what it means to be a person of color in our country. If we are truly open to their experience, to their story, our hearts will change. A small shift in perspective can change our actions and thus in turn can change our society. Jesus calls to us to act like he did, to love like he loved, to speak like he spoke – a lesson I began to learn so many years ago by one teacher in New Jersey!

1https://www.uscatholic.org/church/2008/07/brothers-and-sisters-us

‘Beginning Experience’ Weekend for Those Struggling with Loss of Spouse
The Beginning Experience Team for the Harrisburg Diocese has reserved Camp Hebron in Halifax, Pa., for a Beginning Experience Weekend, Nov 6-8, 2020.

The ecumenical Beginning Experience weekends are designed for those suffering the loss of a spouse through death, divorce or separation. Hundreds of persons have been helped to move towards successful, productive, happy lives by attending one of these weekends.

The weekend is led by persons who have lost a spouse through death or divorce and are trained in facilitating a weekend.

Beginning Experience is your Church at work to provide help, healing and spiritual restoration. Visit www.hbgdiocese.org and go to marriage and family, check www.beginningexperience.org or contact the Harrisburg Beginning Experience Team at 717-379-0800 or harrisburgbe@gmail.com.

*Masks and social distancing will be required.
Venerable Carlo Acutis and His Love for the Eucharist

By Hannah Brockhaus
Catholic News Agency

Venerable Carlo Acutis, an Italian teen whose beatification Pope Francis approved in February, is known for his gift for computer programming, but how he used those skills is what makes him an example of holiness, according to the postulator of his sainthood cause.

Carlo is known to have called the Eucharist his “highway to heaven.”

“We know about Carlo that one of his great pillars was the Eucharist and the other was the Madonna, the Virgin,” Nicola Gori, the postulator of Acutis’ cause for sainthood, told EWTN News.

From his adolescence, Carlo prayed the Rosary daily and in addition to other devotions, frequently spent time in Eucharistic adoration. He said when “we face the sun we become tan... but when we place ourselves in front of the Eucharistic Jesus we become saints.”

Carlo died from a brain tumor in 2006 at the age of 15. The summer after his 14th birthday, he spent researching Eucharistic miracles and creating a website to catalog and share the information with others.

He will be beatified October 10 in Assisi, Italy, at the Basilica of Saint Francis. It will be chaired by Cardinal Angelo Becciu, who is prefect for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Carlo is currently buried in Assisi’s Church of St. Mary Major.

“Carlo wanted people to approach the Eucharist and for this he used the internet,” Gori said.

“One summer before his death, he went to look for where great Eucharistic miracles occurred in the world, those recognized by the Church, from the first Christian era to the present day.”

The website Carlo created was the genesis of The Eucharistic Miracles of the World, an international exhibition which highlights such occurrences.

Carlo, Gori said, was concerned by people growing distant to the Church and the sacraments and he wanted to bring them back.

His website “is a call to shake consciences; say let’s go back to the essentials, let’s go back to filling the churches,” Gori explained, noting that beginning in his childhood Carlo brought people to Mass and to receive the sacraments with him.

“Think, he managed to drag his relatives, his parents to Mass every day. It was not the other way around; it was not his parents bringing the little boy to Mass, but it was he who managed to get himself to Mass and to convince others to receive Communion daily,” Gori said.

The postulator called Carlo a missionary, saying, “he used the internet to spread the Gospel in what way he could.”

Gori also emphasized Carlo’s proper use of computers and the internet. He said that while investigating the boy’s cause for beatification, technicians carried out analyses on his computer to see what websites he visited.

“It was found that his use of the whole computer, all his research was done for good, it was precisely to do something that he had very close to heart,” Gori said.

“Carlo Acutis has never, ever used the internet that has not been for a good purpose.”
**DIOCESAN NOTEBOOK**

**Spiritual Offerings**

Virtual Caelorum event on Facebook, July 1 at 7 p.m. Live praise, worship and Scripture reflection. A link to the live event will be available at the Caelorum Facebook page. Call Lou at 717-215-4175 with any questions.

**Fundraisers & Events**

Seven Sorrows BVM Parish in Middletown will host a blood drive with the Central Pennsylvania Blood Bank, July 9 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. in the school gym. Donors are asked to wear a mask at the drive. Donors will receive a certificate to Sweet Dawgs self-serve frozen desserts and a blood donor t-shirt. A form of ID is required to donate. The blood bank suggests scheduling an appointment to donate; call 1-800-771-0059 or sign up at www.717giveblood.org.

Holy Angels Parish in Kulpmont will hold a blood drive on Friday, July 10 from 3-7 p.m. at the Picnic Shed.

Midnight Smokin’ BBQ event at Holy Infant Parish in Manchester, July 12 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Purchase take-out of delicious smoked meats. Take home or eat at the parish pavilion.

Holy Infant Parish in Manchester will host “Rock N’ Roll at the Pavilion,” Aug. 8 from 6-10 p.m. Listen to music and relive the 1950s with music provided by DJ Michelangelo LaMattina. Dinner from The Sweet Patch Food Truck. Bring a chair or blanket or sit at a picnic table. Bring drinks and snacks to last the evening.

**Job Openings**

York Catholic High School is seeking an Attendance Officer for the 2020-2021 school year. Qualified candidates should demonstrate an understanding of the importance their position plays in all aspects of a student’s developmental progress. Candidates must also be individuals rooted in faith, willing to support Gospel values, and willing to inspire students through their word and example to accept and live these values and teaching. The Attendance Officer is a 10-month position (available mid-August 2020). Duties include attendance and discipline database management and main office support. Requirements: High School diploma, strong interpersonal, computer, and organizational skills, state and federal clearances. Send résumé, transcripts, and pastor letter to Mrs. Patricia Wilding at twilding@sjbnf.org. Interested applicants should refer to the following link for employment application: https://www.hbgdiocese.org/catholic-schools/employment-applications/.

St. John the Baptist School in New Freedom is seeking a fourth-grade teacher for the 2020-2021 school year. This person should have an interest and a passion for teaching children. The ability to collaborate with staff, partnering with parents, and willingness to utilize technology resources for instruction is essential. Candidates must be rooted in their faith and support the Catholic school values. Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and résumé to Tricia Wilding at twilding@sjbnf.org. Interested applicants should refer to the following link for employment application: https://www.717giveblood.org.

St. Francis Xavier School in Gettysburg is seeking a Fourth Grade Teacher, to teach fourth and fifth grade Religion and Social Studies, as well as Fourth Grade ELA. All Diocesan paperwork is required to be completed for the application. Contact Rebecca Sieg, Principal, at bsieg@sfxcs-pa.org or 717-334-4221.

Employment opportunities available at Our Mother of Perpetual Help School in Ephrata. Technology Education & Integrated Technology Teacher (Grades K-8), Physical Education Teacher (Grades K-8), Art Education Teacher (Middle School Grades 6-8), After School Clubs Program Supervisor, and substitute teachers. If interested in any position, send a cover letter, résumé, transcripts, and pastor letter to Mrs. Patricia A. Foltz, Principal, at pfoltz@omph.org.

Sheila Gick, Office Manager, York Catholic High School, 601 East Springettsbury Avenue, York, PA 17403, or sgick@yorkcatholic.org.

St. Joseph School in Gettysburg is seeking a Fourth Grade Teacher, to teach fourth and fifth grade Religion and Social Studies, as well as Fourth Grade ELA. All Diocesan paperwork is required to be completed for the application. Contact Rebecca Sieg, Principal, at bsieg@sfxcs-pa.org or 717-334-4221.

Employment opportunities available at Our Mother of Perpetual Help School in Ephrata. Technology Education & Integrated Technology Teacher (Grades K-8), Physical Education Teacher (Grades K-8), Art Education Teacher (Middle School Grades 6-8), After School Clubs Program Supervisor, and substitute teachers. If interested in any position, send a cover letter, résumé, transcripts, and pastor letter to Mrs. Patricia A. Foltz, Principal, at pfoltz@omph.org.